Cornish College Strategic Plan: 2013 – 2017

Introduction

Cornish College would not be in existence without the support of our whole school community. Together we were able to ensure that our school survived, and now together we are working towards Cornish growing into a stronger and larger school, more able to help our children to grow, learn and make a difference in our world.

A major role of the College Council is to plan for the future of our school, leaving the management in the capable hands of our Principal and staff. Therefore we have been going through a consultative and thorough strategic planning process and now want to share the outcome with you, as we guaranteed that we would keep the whole school community informed. This is the outline of the strategic plan that will guide our planning and decision making over the next five years.

Rev Dr Robert Johnson
Chairperson, College Council

Development of this plan

Cornish College’s educational philosophy was used as a framework to develop this strategic plan.

With a very strong sense of community underpinning the formation of Cornish College in 2012 the College Council has endeavoured to develop a clear blue print for the next five years based on input from all stakeholders in the school. As a consequence the process which has been used has required all in the community to reflect upon what it is they truly value about this community and what is non-negotiable going forward. This process initially commenced in 2012 with education consultant and then council member, David Loader, leading a day long workshop for Council members, members of the College’s Executive team and the Parents’ Association Executive. What became abundantly clear is that we are a community which values and cares for all who are part of it and it is also clear that we are a community which is committed to the notion of education for a sustainable future. To obtain input from the wider College community further focus groups were run by council members, Heather Lyons and parent David Johnson. The feedback gathered from these focus groups confirmed the College as an inclusive community committed to making a positive difference to the lives of those within our community and more broadly across the globe. As a community we value a holistic education which stresses the importance of developing the whole individual rather than just intellectual capacity. Much of this data was shared with the Deloitte Impact Team who carried out an intensive review of the Cornish College demographic and its expectations of the new College. With this information and additional feedback from a series of workshops for parents and staff the Deloitte team produced a report to the College Council summarising the values and expectations of the Cornish College community.

With this extensive self-reflection the College Council, facilitated by parent and strategic planner, Steve McJorrow, conducted a series of strategic planning days which worked to consider all the factors which are likely to impact on the future of the new College. As a result of this process the Council has developed a blue print for our future growth which articulates the sort of community we want to be and establishes a range of principles upon which sustained future growth can be based. As part of this the plan considers responsible financial management of growth, future curriculum design and implementation, the necessary infrastructure and the development of what is considered to be the very special culture of Cornish College.
Cornish College educational philosophy

Our educational philosophy is based on the following core tenets:

- A vision for the whole community of sustainable living based around the sustainable thinking dispositions (personal, socio-cultural, urban/technological, natural dimensions);
- Emphasis on creativity and the development of thinking skills
- Differentiated curriculum to cater for different learning styles
- Strong emphasis on building foundation skills for learning through structured inquiry
- Children and staff work together collaboratively in a team structure

As a Uniting Church school we honour our heritage and commit to building our community on the Christian values of tolerance, kindness, respect for one’s self and others, personal honesty, integrity and self-discipline. Our College is strengthened by people of different faiths and cultural backgrounds who share our core values and add to the richness of school life.

Our current situation

As a school which has been in operation in its own right since 2012, Cornish College is in a rather unique planning position. Given the College is a new business it is essential that its affairs are prudently managed. However, our newness also allows us opportunities for genuine innovation.

Currently we offer co-educational classes from ELC to year 10. This will extend to Year 12 by 2015.

Strategies and Objectives

Objective 1: Ensure the growth of Cornish College is managed in a financially responsible way.

Strategies and measurements:

**The College will;**

- Invest in appropriate physical infrastructure, technology and other capital expenditures. The emphasis will be on functionality.
- Allocate operating cash flow to balance scheduled debt repayments and to investments in developing the College.
- Establish a “margin of safety”, which is a closing cash position to be achieved at the end of each year. This position will be reviewed annually to take into account changing factors.

Objective 2: Develop and deliver a truly innovative curriculum in keeping with our educational philosophies.

Strategies and measurements:

**The College will;**

- Invest in curriculum design and development. Establish a role which has the responsibility to foster the development of the College curriculum and to encourage innovation.
- Make a sufficient investment in professional learning for all staff.
- Continue to build our strong reputation amongst the broader education community for teaching innovation, through programs such as teacher workshops and presentations.
- Provide clear descriptions of its curriculum through appropriate marketing and discussions with the College community at events such as information nights and interviews.
Establish an ingrained sense of the importance of sustainability in the curriculum design. Sustainability should feature strongly in College communications and as a visible theme around the College.

Highlight and celebrate the College’s educational model as one that caters for both student enrichment and special support.

**Objective 3: Develop appropriate settings and infrastructure that will meet the needs of a growing College.**

**Strategies and measurements:**

**The College will:**

Continue to invest in appropriate physical infrastructure. The priority will be to develop functional rather than imposing buildings.

Develop building plans consistent with sound financial management (Objective 1) and the College’s core philosophies.

Develop our school grounds and sporting fields, and optimise the use of our natural surrounds. A separate IT strategy will be developed to ensure that learning technologies and online communications remain a point of emphasis in our curriculum.

**Objective 4: Develop an exemplary senior school infrastructure and delivery.**

**Strategies and measurements:**

**The College will:**

Invest in intellectual and technology-based infrastructure to support teaching and communications.

Develop individualised courses and educational pathways for senior students. An individually focussed careers program will start in Year 9. Multiple modes of program delivery will be offered, encompassing a broad range of VCE and VET subjects.

Deliver sophisticated online course options. This will enable senior students to access a broad range of high quality course content. “Learning coaches” will mentor students studying off campus or online. In the future, the College will investigate offering online courses to students at other institutions.

Evaluate the structure of the traditional school day. Changes, such as providing classes at non-traditional times, may be made in order to facilitate and maximise learning opportunities.

Aim to develop partnerships with non-competitor schools and institutions. This will enable the College to expand its range of course offerings.

Attract and retain skilled and experienced staff.

Focus on developing the “whole” person and someone who will “make a difference.” In keeping with this core tenet of “making a difference” the College will develop opportunities to contribute to and interact with the wider community.

Develop a range of benchmarks to evaluate and monitor student progress. This will not only measure academic success but encourage development as a “whole” person.

Develop comprehensive marketing and communications strategies to promote and explain the unique benefits of the senior school.

Investigate ways the senior school could be accessible to the wider community, for example through evening courses.
Objective 5: To Maintain and enhance the unique Cornish College culture.

Strategies and measurements:

The College will;

Establish a Culture and Community subcommittee of the College Council to develop relationships between the College and its stakeholders. The subcommittee will provide feedback to the College Council on key policies affecting the College culture and the community.

Maintain the College’s focus on “making a difference” and sustainability.

Continue to involve the parent community in the College and encourage community and team-based attitudes. Deepen the connection between school families and the College through social opportunities and parental involvement. Continue to enhance and perfect communication between home and school.

Maintain a values-based attitude which accepts all cultures and beliefs.

Continue and enhance inquiry-based learning.

Create further opportunities to involve the school community with the College.

Attract staff and families with like-minded values and ensure clear communication with College families.

Engage with the wider community.

Objective 6: Establish clear succession management.

Strategy and measurement:

The College will;

Develop and manage a succession management plan for the principal and senior staff, to ensure the ethos of the College is maintained currently and in the future.

Evaluation

The College Council will review the progress of this Strategic Plan on a regular basis.